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PAGE B1

FIGHTING POVERTY

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hour, argues Abdullah Shibli

PAGE 15

HOT ROCKS

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More power by August

6 rental plants ready to
roll; defaulting Cos pay
Tk 210cr fine

SHARIER KHAN

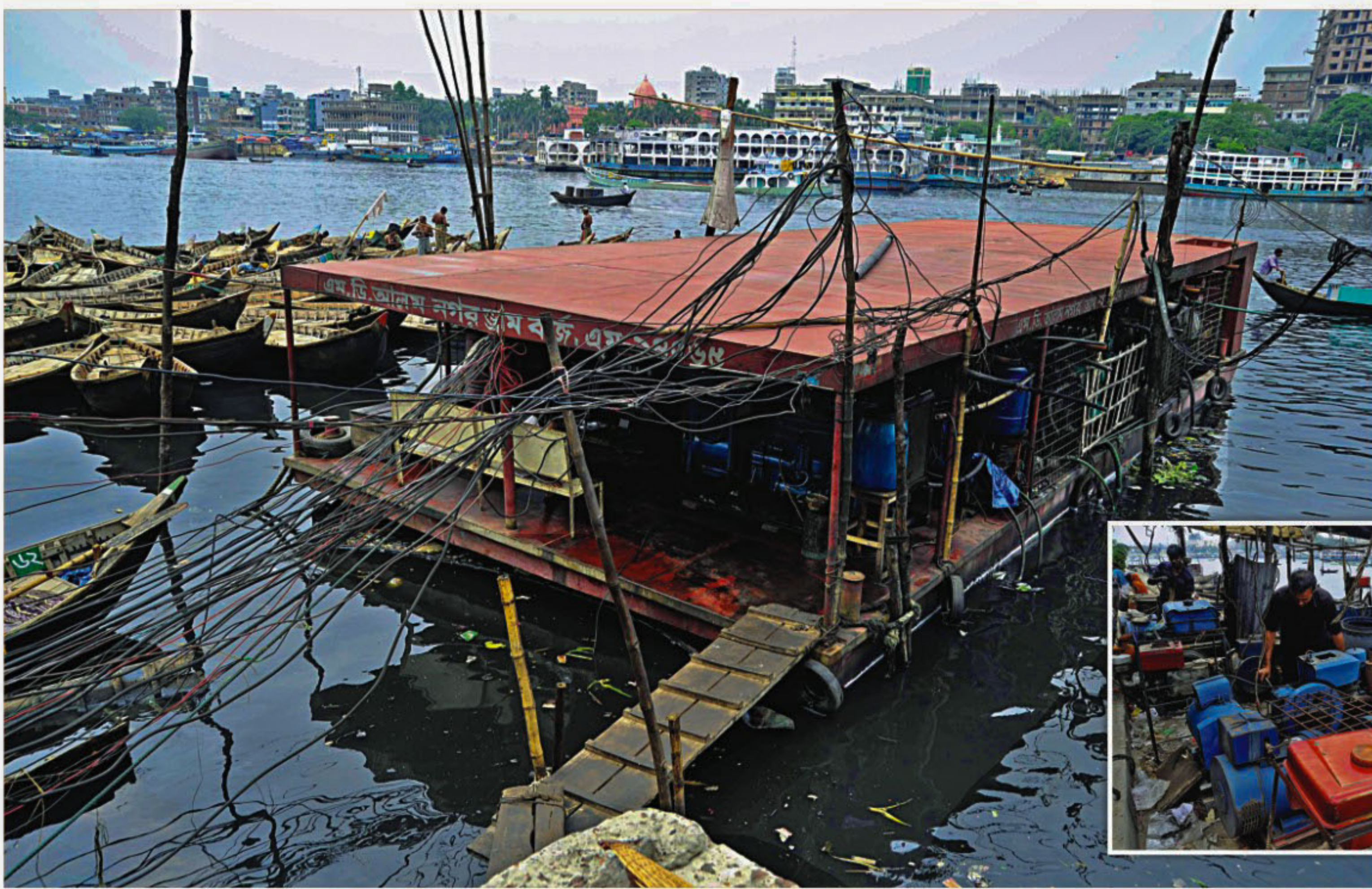
The electricity shortfall is likely to reduce dramatically by August as six rental plants move to operate commercially. "By August, we expect to achieve a new benchmark of power generation -- 5,000 megawatts," said a top official.

Presently, the Power Development Board (PDB) is generating around 4,500 MW leaving a shortfall of minimum 1,000 MW.

Of the six rental plants with generation capacity of 371 MW, three will start contributing to the national grid this month. All the rental plants will operate for three to five years.

Rental plants apart, three public sector peaking power projects, with production capacity of 150 MW, will start to deliver within three months. These plants in Daudkandi, Baghabari and Faridpur are expected to run for 15 years.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5



Local bid for local need

A barge-mounted private rental power unit on the Buriganga River in Keraniganj has been meeting the local power demand with government approval for eight months, since the government is not able to meet the demand. *Inset*, a few single-unit private generators nearby which also run commercially.

PHOTO: ANISUR RAHMAN



AL open to remodelled caretaker system

Insists on talks with opposition for next two polls

HASAN JAHID TUSHER

Ruling Awami League stands open to holding next one or two parliamentary elections under non-partisan caretaker governments, but insists that the parliament has to devise a new formula in line with the Supreme Court verdict.

To AL the current constitutional provision of the caretaker government system has been dead since it was voided by the country's highest

court in May.

At the same time the party is ready to accept a new model of election-time caretaker administration, and wants its main rival Bangladesh Nationalist Party to debate the issue in parliament to reach a consensus.

"Both the government and our party are soft on dialogue with the opposition on this issue," said AL Presidium Member Obaidul Quader adding that nothing one-sided will be done in the next election.

"A political consensus is a must to hold the next two elections under a new caretaker government system," he said. The current system will not be there as AL stands by the SC verdict that declared it unconstitutional, Quader told The Daily Star.

He said if BNP gives any proposal, AL will also reciprocate with its own idea. "If their [BNP's] proposal proves more logical than ours, we may even accept their idea," added

SEE PAGE 19 COL 5

Summary trial under question

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Mobile courts in last three days awarded jail terms to over 100 people in the capital for hartal violence, but family members of some of the convicts alleged that many innocents were victimised.

Seeking anonymity, the family members said the mobile courts did not listen to the versions of the arrestees and sent them to jail though no witnesses of their 'crimes'

SEE PAGE 19 COL 3

Hartal ends 2-day agitation to follow

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Law enforcers arrested dozens of opposition men and mobile courts jailed several persons on charges of attacking vehicles and disrupting public life on the last day yesterday of the 36-hour countrywide hartal called by the BNP-led opposition.

The nationwide hartal or general strike enforced by BNP and its key ally Jamaat-e-Islami to press for continuation of the constitutional provision of holding parliamentary elections under a caretaker government passed off without any major violence.

Both the parties yesterday simultaneously announced a two-day demonstration from tomorrow protesting arrest and punishment of party workers in summary trials by mobile courts, and demanding release of the arrested.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 2

Mobile courts foiled looting, killing plots

Sahara tells JS

STAFF CORRESPONDENT

Home Minister Sahara Khatun yesterday in parliament claimed mobile courts have foiled main opposition BNP's "plot to murder people and loot shops" during the 36-hour hartal.

Defending operation of mobile courts during the hartal hours, the minister claimed everything was done as per law to save

SEE PAGE 19 COL 7

BUMPER HARVEST Slight drop in food inflation

OUR CORRESPONDENT

Inflation edged down 0.47 percentage points to 10.20 percent in May thanks to a dip in rice prices following bumper boro harvest.

Food inflation declined to 13.16 percent in May from 14.36 percent in April, when the overall inflation hit at 10.67 on point to point basis, the highest in more than two years since the food price hike in 2007-08.

Meanwhile, non-food inflation rose to 4.78 percent in May from 3.97 percent in April due to hike in fuel prices by the government early last

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1



Office going people turn to trains as safer and cheaper mode of transportation during hartal. The photo was taken at Airport Railway Station in the capital yesterday.

PHOTO: STAR

CHAR KUKRIMUKRI 55 forest plunderers sued

OUR CORRESPONDENT,
Patuakhali

Bhola forest department yesterday sued the plunderers of the mangrove forest at Char Kukrimukri.

Ahia Hussain, the beat officer, filed two cases against 55 named and several unnamed persons with the Char Fashion Upazila Executive Magistrate Court.

Hashem Mohajon, a close aide to local Awami League lawmaker Abdullah Al Islam, is the main accused in both the cases.

The court may give its

SEE PAGE 19 COL 6

BUS TORCHING CASE Altaf, Hafiz sent to jail

COURT CORRESPONDENT

Former BNP ministers Altaf Hossain Chowdhury and Hafiz Uddin Ahmed, who were arrested in the capital during hartal on Sunday, were sent to jail yesterday in connection with a case filed against them for setting fire to a vehicle on June 11.

First Additional Chief Metropolitan Magistrate of Dhaka AHM Habibur

SEE PAGE 19 COL 4

Fish, vegetables get pricier

Traders blame it on supply disruption during hartal

SOHEL PARVEZ

Consumers had to pay more for fish and vegetables in the last two days for a disruption in supply in the capital during the opposition-enforced 36-hour shutdown, retailers said yesterday.

Prices of hilsha soared to Tk 600-700 a kilogram from Tk 500-600, and ruhi to Tk 200-250 from 180-220 a kilogram over the last two days, said the Trading Corporation of Bangladesh.

"There has been a shortfall in



supply. Many trucks could not reach the market from the fish hubs for the hartal," said Gautam Das, a fish trader at Karwan Bazar.

Gautam yesterday sold a 700-gram hilsha for Tk 400 that was Tk

350 last week. He bought four hilshas for Tk 1,400, upped by Tk 200 from the previous week, said the trader.

He said a fall in supply caused prices of ruhi and katla to go up. Gautam this week bought a kg of ruhi at Tk 240, which was Tk 220 last week.

Shrimp also became costlier in the last two days. However, prices of cheap fish such as pangash remained unchanged.

The strike from early Sunday also contributed to a hike in vegetable prices.

SEE PAGE 19 COL 1

Launch fares to rise up to 20pc

Rate to be re-fixed today amid fuel price hike

PANKAJ KARMAKAR

After around a month of raising the bus fares, the government is set to increase the launch fares by 10 to 20 percent within this week.

The shipping ministry will finalise the new fares today after scrutinising the fares proposed by an eleven-member committee. The body was formed on June 2 to re-fix the fares of passenger vessels plying different inland river routes.

According to proposed fares, launches will charge each passenger Tk 1.30 per kilometre instead of Tk 1.18 for the first 100 km. If anyone travels more, the passenger will have to pay Tk 1.00 per km, which was Tk 0.88 previously.

The minimum fare has been increased from Tk 10 to Tk 12, said an official of the Bangladesh Inland Water Transport Authority (BIWTA).

The government decided to raise the

SEE PAGE 19 COL